



Connect, Empower, Inspire

Stories from Participants





Outdoor Youth Connection (OYC) Graduates Return to Inspire



Christopher Rodriguez and Elmer Ayala have been friends for as long as they can remember. Both grew up in South Sacramento and were members of the Washington Neighborhood Center in Downtown Sacramento, where, in 2007, they discovered the OYC Program. Both graduated from college and together started their careers with California State Parks.



Christopher's Story:

"My dad was on the board for the Washington Neighborhood Center, and my mom works in a health clinic for Native Americans. They both taught me the value of education and the importance of giving back to the community through volunteer work. *I had a memorable time. However, the true feat of my OYC experience was planning and leading a service project for the community. I was excited to know that I could help out further with the program and become a "Youth Council Member."* This meant that other members

and I would go back to future trainings to help out in whatever ways we could; this was a great way of meeting new people from all over. We helped out for the next few years in several trainings/events that ranged from a beach play day in Huntington Beach or training at Mt. Diablo.

After graduating high school I attended San Francisco State University where I graduated with my Bachelors of Science degree in Civil Engineering. My education, my support from my family, and programs like OYC helped me get there. More specifically, OYC helped me tap into positive thinking and leadership roles. Project planning, communicating with peers, and being open minded played key roles in my studies and as me as a person in general. At trainings, I can look at the youth and see me and my friends in the same position; it wasn't too long ago when we were in the same position. It makes me excited to see them be excited with what they are doing at training and being enthusiastic in what they can do for their community and in the future."



Elmer's Story:

"My mother always stressed how important education was to me and my younger sister. I discovered the OYC program while volunteering at the Washington Neighborhood Center in downtown Sacramento, and it was through them that I was able to participate in OYC. From that point on - I was hooked. I began to be active in my community and attempted to make

changes. We threw a neighborhood block party soon after at the center in an attempt to offer a safer option for families, kids, and teens other than getting into trouble. We offered arts and crafts, a basketball tournament, food and drinks, our own version of a game show for everyone to participate in, and overall it was very much a success.

From there I went on to Sacramento City College for 3 years and eventually transferred to California State University East Bay out in Hayward, CA. I thoroughly enjoyed studying in the Bay Area. During my tenure there I looked to give back to my community just like I did with OYC before, and eventually I joined Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity Inc. before I graduated. One of the things we pride ourselves on is giving back to the community through community service, and one of the best examples of that so far was building a playground by hand for the Salvation Army in Hayward. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzBUXUOPzkY>.



Making Me a Strong Leader and Community Activist

By Aranzasu Caballero

FamCamp gives me the opportunity to get out of my usual boring routine. My mom doesn't like me going out of the house too much. Mostly due to how the area is. I like going to Calaveras State park because I am able to go for a morning jog with no worries. The morning hikes through those giant trees is something I look forward to for a whole year. I might hike with a group on those mornings but in our thoughts, we're all alone. Taking in the scenery and just taking in the free air. Duarte is a great place, but for being such a small town, it feels so good to just get away for a while. FamCamp has been a great resource that I have been able to use in my life. I want to grow and explore what this world has to offer so that I can come back to Duarte and give back to the community that helped me grow.



Something I want from this program is to introduce a new kid into it. One day they might even follow in my footsteps. A big part about the FamCamp program is that this new kid will have to learn is that with all the beautiful places, there will always be something new that they have to try. My first trip to Malibu Creek had me learn how to be a member of the team. It also taught me to speak up when a problem starts to arise. The older members in our after school program were in charge of us while we were there. So when I was old enough, I went to OYC (Outdoor Youth Connection) which was the training that gave us the access to the FamCamp equipment. We set up the lanterns and the stoves that are connected to gas cans. We set up our tents along with our sleeping bags and sleeping mats. In between the three days that we are there for, we play team building games and we even go kayaking for a bit. At the end of the three days, we get a certificate from the program and are officially able to use the FamCamp Camp trailers where they are available.

The trips had also taught me that my parents won't always be by my side to help me. They can't always be there to fix my mistakes. I have to do things on my own and fix my own problems. Like I said before, my first trip with the program had me in a team as just a member. Our leaders were the veterans of the program. But after the OYC training, I had seen myself only as a leader and nothing else. I was given the motivation to speak up more and learn from the mistakes of others as well as my own. I feel as though I have matured through the few years that I have been here. Giving a teenager like me the power over my peers is something that can be hit or miss. In my case, I think it was a homerun.

I have camped with people older than me. I camped with people younger with me. I camped with people my own age. I have the opportunity to camp with kids from other cities.

Now I have friends from Hawaiian gardens, East Los Angeles, West Hollywood, Walnut and Oxnard among others. Friends that I talk to till this very day.

Some of the campsites that my YAL have stayed at are Malibu creek, Castaic Lake, Leo Carrillo state beach, Calaveras big tree state park, Silverwood, San Simeon state park. They are all really pretty, and have their own unique features but my favorite is Leo Carrillo because we are able to walk to the beach in the morning and it is something I will never forget it is a beautiful experience.

Thanks to FamCamp I have learned to live in the outdoors without cell phone services which is something that teens today know nothing about. There's nothing I would change about FamCamp I have had many great experiences. FamCamp Camp is a great program and I hope I am still able to go on a lot more camping trips in new places with my YAL.



City of Fresno PARCS

By Wendi Danyluk

On August 10 –12 2015 Wendy Moon and I brought a group of 14 teens to the OYC Youth Leadership Training. The teens were positively affected by this training and were excited to complete their projects. On October 3rd and 4th 25 teens went to Fort Washington beach. The teens planted trees and did a pond and river clean up along the San Joaquin River. The wind prevented a fire so they had a rousing game of glow in the dark hide and seek. A rare summer storm brought wind and rain, but did not spoil their fun. It was there that they came up with their group name. E.M.T. Empowerment Management Team, Healing the Community One Teen at a Time.

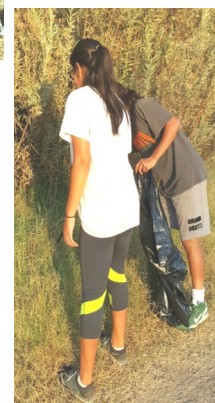
On October 24th The youth brought Friends 40 in all, showed up and volunteered at our annual Kids Fest at Holmes Neighborhood Center. It was a full day of set up and manning carnival booths, bounce houses, a petting zoo, and then clean up for a very large event.

November 7, 2015 we had a teen meeting with our core group and brought in 6 new teens from the community to talk about our future as a group and make plans to continue on first up the Grand opening of the UAP Inspiration Park all the teens volunteered to run the carnival games and help set up and tear down. We made plans to enlarge our group plan more volunteer opportunities and ways to reach out to teens in the community. And for fun we planned an Up All Night overnigher in our Gym at the Ted C. Wills Community Center. We played many team building games and activities. We also discussed ways to raise funds for future projects.

November 14th the E.M.T.'s came to the Grand Opening of Inspiration Park. We were setting up when we ran into Sedrick right before the opening ceremonies, during the press conference our group was called up by Sedrick to showcase what a great bunch of kids can do.

November 21st we had our Up All Night it was a great success and a lot of fun we had a guest speaker from Youth Empowerment to the kids about Bullying and depression. We pigged out on pizza, cotton candy, shaved ice music and team building games and races.

Next up the Christmas Parade and our Annual Christmas Carnival "Santa's Village" And our E.M.T. Christmas potluck and drive down Christmas Tree Lane. Into the New Year we expect to grow and reach out to more areas in our community.





Roberts Family Development Center and Outdoor Youth Connection

By Derrell Roberts, Co-Founder

This year the Roberts Family Development Center was able to have 4 staff members attend the OYC training, two team leaders and two student interns. For us the training was extremely useful because it allowed seasoned staff to develop new strategies and skills to engage not only with students in day to day activities, it also helped with team building with their colleges and the families they serve. This training opened the doors of leadership to the youth that they never knew existed. This summer we provided a high quality summer reading and enrichment program Monday – Friday to about 400 youth in Sacramento County as well as an evening program on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night geared to give teens of North Sacramento between 13-17Yrs old a safe place to hang out and enjoy themselves. For most this grew into a family event drawing crowds of 500 plus on most nights.

During our daily summer program, staff was able to build trust with the students through a variety of team building activities and enrichments like our boys and girls leadership groups that focused on social skills.

The scholars were able to share freely and openly during our weekly sessions. This summer all of our sites went on a three day, two night camping trip where they were able to go hiking, fishing, swimming, and archery. Scholars also learned about nature and astrology. During the trip scholars not only had to balance fun and learning in a different environment but they also had to balance

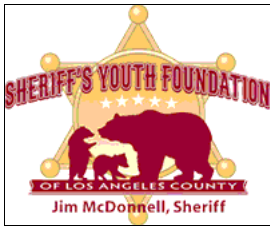


chores like cleaning the kitchen and serving meals.



Our student intern experience was very different. Typically student interns assist program staff by running errands and providing an extra set of eyes and ears to help supervise and provide support to our younger scholars. They girls were able to share a variety of roles during the summer and so far this school year. This summer they were not only able to help manage students but they were also able run their own enrichments with minimal support and they ran a creative writing enrichment,

where scholars with a prompt, were encouraged to write creatively as well as keep journals. During our weekend enrichments teens participated in poetry, art, dance, a cooking class, weekly basketball tournaments, football camp and baseball. The teens really enjoyed our weekly talent shows, skate board tutorials and Saturday night concerts. Our student interns helped plan and led these activities along with other program enrichments.



Memories and the Outdoors

Deputy Arthur Valenzuela

Los Angeles County Sheriff Department

Temple Station Youth Activities League

The partnership with California State Parks FamCamp program has become one of my strongest outreach programs working with at-risk male and females between the ages of 7-17 with and demographic break down of approximately 90% Latino/Hispanic, 10% Black/African American, all youth served are classified lower income and at-risk with a household income of less than \$30,000 per year.



FamCamp and the Outdoor Recreation Leadership Programs have allowed me to introduce the outdoors and overnight camping to youth served well promoting teamwork, leadership, self-awareness and confidence.

The program has allowed youth the opportunity to camp at Castaic Lake, Leo Carrillo State Beach, Malibu Creek State Park, San Simeon State Park and Calaveras Big Trees State Park. This opportunity wouldn't be possible without the camping equipment inside the FamCamp trailer and the campsites reserved by State Parks.

During the program I have taken youth to the beach for the first time, taught them how to swim, fish, cook, clean and look at the stars.

This is truly a unique program that instills a fondness and respect for the outdoors with many of the youth looking forward to sharing the experience with their families and future kids.

Myself and my partners in the Los Angeles County Sheriff Department East Los Angeles, Lakewood and West Hollywood Stations would like to

thank you for this opportunity to bring these lifetime memories to the youth and communities we serve.





Brief Description

FamCamp® is a program of the California State Parks and the California State Parks Foundation that began in 1994. It is the largest statewide program for meeting the Department's strategic initiatives for improving services to underserved low-income communities, expanding urban connections and creating new recreational opportunities.

The goals are:

- To introduce camping to those who would otherwise not have the opportunity to have an overnight outdoor recreation experience.
- To strengthen relationships by offering a new form of recreation.
- To promote a safe, affordable recreation activity that can include all members of the community regardless of age, race, gender, disability, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation and national origin.
- To encourage the use of outdoor recreation as a tool for meeting community goals.



The *FamCamp*® program provides the eligible organizations with access to a trailer containing camping equipment as well as a reserved campsite at a selected State Park. Over a dozen *FamCamp*® trailers are located throughout California; each one can accommodate up to 30 campers. Each trailer includes tents, stoves, lanterns, sleeping bags and liners and other essential items for camping. Participating organizations need to provide their own food, personal gear, cooking utensils (pots, pans etc.) a good attitude for new experiences and a coordinator to lead the trip, and act as liaison with Park staff.

How can your organization participate in *FamCamp*®?

FamCamp is a program for community organizations or public agencies to access State Parks. Ask your local organization to work with California State Parks, Office of Community Involvement to arrange for participation in the program.

Who can participate?

Non-profits or public agencies who serve youth, adults and families who traditionally lack access to nature-based recreational opportunities.

Where is *FamCamp*®?

There are *FamCamp*® programs located throughout the State. Reservations must be made in advance by your local community organization or public agency.

To learn more about the *FamCamp*® program and location sites, contact the Office of Community Involvement:

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California State Parks
Office of Community Involvement
1416 9th Street, Room 918
Sacramento, CA 95814
Office: (916) 653-5454
Fax: (916) 651-2079
Email: FamCamp@parks.ca.gov



To learn more about our programs, please visit our website at www.parks.ca.gov/oci

California State Parks

Office of Community Involvement &
California State Parks Foundation



Upcoming Outdoor Recreation Leadership Training Opportunity for 2017

This exciting training focuses on the role of outdoor recreation in developing leadership skills. Training topics include:

- Role of recreation in community building
- Youth development principles and community improvement strategies with implementation tools and tips
- Leadership development and networking opportunities
- Outdoor recreation skill development and program planning
- Group facilitation with diverse communities
- Team building activities and opportunities to enhance programming and much more!

Upon completion of the training, participants will receive a two-year certification that provides access to take others camping using the California State Parks' FamCamp® Program.



2017 Training Date & Location

TRAINING DATE	LOCATION	REGION
April 25, 26 & 27	San Luis Reservoir SRA	No. California
May 9, 10 & 11	Castaic Lake SRA	So. California

The training session consists of three-days & two nights of camping, starting 1:00 pm the first day, a full 2nd day and ending at 12 Noon on the last day.

"Critically important program to assist getting youth, families, and diverse communities to the outdoors."- Luis R., CA State Parks

"By far one of the best trainings I have been involved with the County of Los Angeles in nearly 20 years."- Richard A., LA Co. Parks & Rec.

"I found that this program has prepared me to lead youth camping more comfortably than ever before. I have taken many things away from the training, and enjoyed most the attention on logistics and operations of running a large camp, while making it fun and educational at the same time."- Anthony B., National Park Service

Cost of registration is \$200 per participant, payable to California State Park Foundation at time of registration. Payments can be made by agency check, money order or credit card. A 10% registration discount applies for enrollment of three or more participants per agency.

Visit our website at www.parks.ca.gov/oci for additional information on all our programs or contact:

Office of Community Involvement
at (916) 653-5454

Space is limited– so don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity. Register early!

Upcoming Outdoor Youth Connection Training Opportunities for 2017

Presented by California State Parks – Office of Community Involvement

& California State Parks Foundation



Goal: To empower youth to access the outdoors and unlock their leadership potential.

Objective: A three-day leadership training for youth ages 13 to 17 in outdoor activities, team building and leadership skills while camping at a California State Park. Upon completion of the training the youth will use the experience and skills learned to organize a minimum of 2 events for their peers: PLAN, PREPARE, & LEAD a recreational outing & a public service project.



TRAINING DATES & LOCATIONS FOR 2017

TRAINING DATES

June 13, 14 & 15
June 23, 24 & 25
June 27, 28 & 29
July 11, 12 & 13
July 21, 22 & 23
July 25, 26 & 27

LOCATIONS

San Luis Reservoir SRA
Castaic Lake SRA
Castaic Lake SRA
San Luis Reservoir SRA
Castaic Lake SRA
Castaic Lake SRA

REGIONS

No. Cal.
So. Cal.
So. Cal.
No. Cal.
So. Cal.
So. Cal.

*Training dates and locations subject to change. Participating groups must provide all transportation and adult chaperones during the entire event.

Registration costs: \$35 per person due 3 weeks prior to the training. Payments can be made by check, money order or credit card. *(Payments are non-refundable)*

Training includes:

- 3 days & 2 nights training in leadership & life while camping in a state park
- resource materials for planning with staff support services & guidance
- Practical experiences in planning, organizing, leading trips/events
- Team building activities & outdoor adventures pursuits
- Meals and camping equipment during the trip
- Access to FamCamp®

**SIGN UP
TODAY**

For more information contact the Office of Community Involvement:

Main Phone: (916) 653-5454
Office Fax: (916) 651-2079

Visit our website at www.parks.ca.gov/oci to learn more about our programs and like us on Facebook!

California State Parks

Office of Community Involvement

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California State Parks”